

National

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Member
since 1994

Biways

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NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE BISEXUAL MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Produced by the Australian Bisexual Network PO Box 490 Lutwyche Qld 4030

WELL halloween is PAST, xmas is OVER,
new year's EVE has COME and GONE, so has EASTER
WHAT is LEFT?

30th

PRIDE

Anniversary

of Stonewall

Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay & Transgender People
around the World will celebrate

Stonewall Day, June 28th.

with Pride marches, festivals, parties, films and other events,
during June & July.

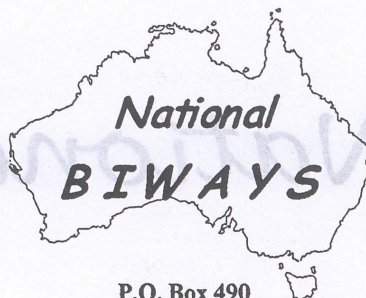
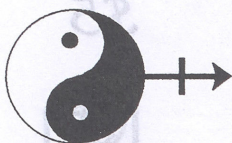
THEN ON

September 23rd

Celebrate Bisexuality Day

Read all about it and more inside this issue of National Biways.

See inside for all the Bi news, issues and pics from events.
The Bi Personals & Resources come as a Supplement.



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ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

BrotherSister (QLD), Sydney Star Observer, BiNet USA News and others on the Internet.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

National BIWAYS is produced by the Australian Bisexual Network to inform its audience about social, political and personal issues relevant to bisexuality and bisexual people, to provide a forum for exchanging opinions and sharing experiences, to link up with and support geographically or socially isolated bisexual people, to foster the Bisexual Movement in Australia and to help build a diverse multicultural community of bisexual and bi-friendly people and groups in Australia and elsewhere.

ABN realises that bisexuality is inextricably linked to other identities (gender, race, class, etc). Our intention is that *National BIWAYS* will represent a broad spectrum of bisexual voices and images. We are committed to taking an active role in building a multicultural bisexual community free of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and other forms of oppression.

Through self-examination and through the contents of this news magazine, we will endeavour to challenge our own racism, classism, sexism (and our own biphobia) as well as that of others. We will work to create a supportive bisexual community and to promote equality and understanding for bisexual people in both the heterosexual and the lesbian/gay communities. We regard ourselves as part of a larger sexual minority (queer) community, a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities, and consider the fight for lesbian and gay rights to be our own. We advocate the recognition, inclusion and involvement of bisexual people in existing gay and lesbian and transgender communities, in lesbian and gay politics, in community development and consultations, in sexual health and HIV/AIDS issues, policy, research and education. ABN does not support the promotion of paedophilia or organisations that promote it.

We are sex-positive, recognising that we live under increasing sexual oppression. We support sex education for its own sake. We advocate the distribution of information and resources to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, STDs and unwanted pregnancies. We support the rights of people with HIV/AIDS to be free of discrimination, to have access to information, housing and quality medical care and treatments.

We seek to expand, not constrain, the definitions of bisexual and we respect the right of the individual to define her/his own self-definition, identity and type of relationship(s), free from any social, political, religious or economic coercion. We support healthy relationships between consenting adults. We acknowledge the right of partners, particularly female partners of bisexual men, to quality non-judgemental counselling and health services if needed, to greater understanding by all communities and to honesty in their relationship.

National BIWAYS is published at least once every two months. It is available by membership subscription, exchange, from various affiliated bisexual groups in Australia or through our international outreach work. The views expressed in this magazine are those of the authors unless otherwise stated. The inclusion of a person's name or photograph or business advertisement should not be taken as an indication of their sexual identity or sexual orientation.

The Australian Bisexual Network, Bisexual Youth Alliance, the Bisexual Community Information Service and *National BIWAYS* are unfunded and rely on your support to keep going. We welcome submissions of material for publication; assistance with production; involvement in Network and group activities, individual and community financial or "in kind" support.

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Material in *National BIWAYS* may be reproduced by other bisexual or bi-friendly groups provided the publication and author are acknowledged. We encourage other groups to do the same.

The Australian Bisexual Network is a full member of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and is host group for ILGA's Bisexual Information Pool, providing information on Bisexuality to individuals and groups worldwide.

EDITORIAL

Apologies, apologies to all!!!! Yes we are a several months late with our first magazine for 1999. So much has happened since Christmas 1998 and we have been busy and working in the best interests of bisexual people and the Bi Community.

Firstly let me thank Brenda and Bob for their editorship of National Biways Magazine during 1998. Unfortunately Brenda and Bob separated just before Christmas so the magazine production has now been placed in my capable hands again, thus the reason it is late. I just have too many jobs, so please be patient as I am doing my best. I am sure all of you appreciate the fact that we are all volunteers and many of us have full time jobs and/or family commitments that must come first.

If anyone has plenty of time and a desire to leave their mark, a computer with at least win95, e-mail access and possibly a scanner, then perhaps you would consider taking on the production of National Biways for a period of time.

I thought for this issue of NBM, we would look at discrimination and violence directed at bisexual people and at the Bi community.

As some of you may be aware of the fact that bisexual men and women have, since 1978, been involved in many different ways with the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Back then they marched, protested, were arrested and bashed by police alongside their lesbian, gay, transgender and, yes, straight sisters and brothers. Over the years, bisexual women and men have volunteered their services, skills and talents for each of the Mardi Gras Festivals, Parades and Parties and also Sleaze Ball. We joined as members and attended the parties, fair days and other events. We spend our money in the community.

In January 1999, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd., sank to their lowest level since a special meeting of members in 1995 narrowly passed a rule requiring bisexuals to prove their worthiness to be granted membership. In January SGLMG rejected the membership applications of three Sydney bisexual men who have been active in Sydney's queer community for some years. As if this was not enough, they also rejected the membership renewal of another bisexual man from Sydney. How many others were rejected but did not publicise the fact or bring it to our attention. It has been some years since ABN last received notice of Mardi Gras rejecting bisexual applicants. In 1996 a Sydney man had his application rejected and this was followed by a Lismore woman. However generally there have been few incidents at least those that have been brought to our attention.

The difference this time is that two of these men, Glenn Vassallo and Dean Durber, lodged appeals to the Board of SGLMG. They had supporting evidence of their involvement in the community and references from gay members of Mardi Gras. The Board rejected their applications for membership without a question being asked of them. The reason since given, is that they would diminish the essential gay and lesbian character of Mardi Gras. This seems strange given the fact that bisexual men and women have been involved in and members of Mardi Gras since 1978 and since the 1995 ruling. I am currently a member and have been since 1993/94 and have consistently indicated that I am bisexual. My 1999/2000 membership renewal has been accepted as have those of several other bisexual members, so why is this different?

Why is this significant? Are not bisexuals discriminated against by mainstream (straight) organisations, clubs and services? Well, yes we are. However this discrimination comes from an organisation born out of the struggle for equality and gay rights. A struggle that includes us. A struggle that bisexuals have been a part of. Some people argue that we have come in after the fact, others say we should set up our own organisation and have our own party. Well, Mardi Gras is just as much our organisation, our parade and our party as that of any gay man, lesbian or transgender person. The difference here is that if you lie and say you are gay or lesbian or transgender, you are given automatic membership with no questions asked. If you are open and honest and say you are bisexual, then all you can expect is discrimination and rejection. Is that fair? Should we not speak up about such injustice? Well yes we should. See some of the statements and comments in this issue.

HATE, DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE and a little JUSTICE

Bisexual men and women can suffer discrimination, abuse and violence just like anyone else but unlike some other people we can suffer from homophobia like our lesbian, gay and transgender counterparts. We can also suffer discrimination and abuse because we identify as bisexual and this can come from both the gay and straight sides of society. The main problem is that unless the abuse is severe, few bisexuals come forth to report incidences of discrimination or violence or they are reported as gay rather than bi and thus made invisible in the statistics. Discrimination can occur at school, university, work or when using various services in the community. Abuse and violence can occur in similar situations but can also occur in the home, the street, at beats used by men and at night clubs and pubs. Here are some of the more severe examples.

CINCINNATI, Oct. 15, 1998 (UPI)

Suburban Cincinnati homicide detectives say a beaten and strangled 42-year-old bisexual man may have met his killer in a gay bar. Michael Carpenter's wife found his nude body Sunday on the bedroom floor of their home, his hands tied behind his back with a sock. Mrs. Carpenter said she returned home from work late Sunday to her Clermont County home, about 15 miles northeast of Cincinnati, and found her 42-year-old husband's body. The couple had been married for 12 years and Mrs. Carpenter said she knew about her husband's bisexuality.

Police Sgt. Terry Zinser told United Press International there were no signs of forced entry into the apartment, and that jewelry, the victim's wallet, and his car were missing. The automobile was later recovered in Cincinnati and is being processed for clues.

CADILLAC, Mich., March 16, 1999 (UPI)

A police profile describing a killer's sexual perversions has led to the arrests of two men in the death of a San Diego woman whose nude body was dumped at a northern Michigan rest stop. Police say 36-year-old Veronica Salazar was hanged and beaten Sept. 1 by at least one bisexual man who used rope to play out his sexual fantasies. It's believed Salazar was traveling through the area when she was attacked, although police are not releasing details about why she was in Michigan, nor whether she knew the suspects. Their names have not been released.

CHARLESTON GAZETTE, March 3, 1999.

Charleston lawyer John Einreinhofer told a jury that when his client kicked a bisexual man in the face so badly he needed reconstructive surgery, he was merely "taking out the trash." Einreinhofer told the jury his client was doing them a favor by ridding their community of this bisexual man.

Well, when the jury came back, they did a little garbage disposal of their own. The assailant, Robert Bowers, was convicted of aggravated robbery and malicious wounding and is awaiting sentencing.

SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, March 5, 1999.

Driven to the brink by his wife's purported lesbian love affairs, Todd Dean Koolmo fatally shot the woman at their Salt Lake City home last year while "experiencing an emotional stew of love, hate, jealousy and despair," his attorneys asserted Thursday as a seven-day homicide trial began. But prosecutors allege the defendant pondered murder for weeks before killing 28 year old Melissa Koolmo on March 18, 1998.

Prosecutor Blake Nakamura contended the Koolmos' "open marriage" -- which included three-way sexual encounters -- had nothing to do with the murder. In fact, Koolmo told police he thought his wife's lesbian activities were "a big joke," and she mentioned them to arouse him.

Forensic evidence will show Koolmo shot twice at Melissa. One bullet struck her in the face, causing profuse bleeding that asphyxiated her. The second slug grazed her right shoulder.

The Koolmos grew up in Minnesota, where they met as teen-agers while working in a small department store, Moffat said. They married 11 years ago, and moved to California, where Todd Koolmo spent time as a reserve police officer. In 1996, they came to Salt Lake City.

During early-morning confrontations, Melissa hinted at "homosexual flings," Moffat said. The couple talked about divorce. Todd began drinking alone at night, and sometimes vented his anger by sending e-mail messages to a friend.

Melissa began staying out all night. The second week in March, she did not come home for two nights. Days later, they had a fight that included slapping and shoving. Melissa threatened to call the police. Todd packed his bags, then got his gun and threatened suicide, Moffat said.

SACRAMENTO, The Recorder, March 25, 1999. Taking Out the Sting - Bruce Nickerson makes his living defending targets of gay sex busts. By Nick Budnick

Two doors have disappeared from their stalls in a state building bathroom, and Bruce Nickerson couldn't be happier. Striding back and forth in a Sacramento courtroom waiting for a judge to show up, the bald, 57-year-old lawyer excitedly brandishes glossies of the naked toilet stalls while holding forth to four seated attorneys, some looking bored, others attentive.

The photos, he proclaims, are proof -- proof! -- that the state realizes his client, even if he had proceeded to have sex with another man in that restroom, would have committed no crime. Removing the doors is a tacit admission by the state that there had been the necessary element of privacy which would negate a finding of lewd conduct, he claims.

The local lawyers look at each other to see who's buying what the San Carlos solo practitioner is selling. Prosecutor Jennifer Moncrieff walks in, all business, briefcase under her arm, and Nickerson promptly starts waving the photos beneath her nose and talking excitedly.

"No, no, no. That's not true," says Moncrieff, shaking her head and smiling a tight, disapproving smile. But a short time later she drops the charges for lack of evidence.

Nickerson practically sings with joy as he returns to his red compact.

Another day, another gay man rescued from a wrongful arrest and prosecution. It's cases like these, including two successful ones before the California Supreme Court, that lead Nickerson to straight-facedly describe himself as "the state's best toilet lawyer." A bisexual who has seven children from two heterosexual marriages, he regards his practice as a crusade, his contribution to the larger gay rights movement.

"I do not enjoy practicing law on cases I don't believe in," he says. "I don't really get my jollies fighting tooth and nail for some thug who you know he might attack my wife and child later. But this is something totally different. First of all, the people are not guilty. Secondly, the arrest is a result of prejudice. What more satisfying type of law can you practice?"

Nickerson may actually be "the state's best toilet lawyer," and he isn't likely to be unseated anytime soon. Frankly, there hasn't been a lot of competition for the job. He has earned his reputation and his living largely off public restrooms and parks where gay men are picked up during undercover sex stings and charged with soliciting with the intent to have sex in public.

He is one of many attorneys in the gay community who feel that such arrests are often illegal, because they're made only against homosexuals or because the evidence is insufficient to support a conviction.

For Nickerson, every case knocks a brick from the wall of discrimination against gays, and his unique brand of legal activism has been credited for changing both police and prosecutorial practices.

Former Recorder reporter Nick Budnick is a free-lance writer based in Sacramento.

CHARLESTON (WV) GAZETTE March 30, 1999. Judge sends message with 60-year sentence!

By Kay Michael, Staff Writer.

A 37-year-old Nitro man convicted of beating and robbing a bisexual traveling salesman who had befriended him was sentenced Monday to a 60-year prison term for the August 1997 assault.

Kanawha Circuit Judge Jim Stucky said he wasn't buying the Robert Bowers III's argument that he was trying to protect himself from the victim's sexual advances. Bowers was convicted in January of the attack on 36-year-old William Wilder of Ohio. Before he was sentenced, Bowers told the court he was sorry for what happened. He said he was forced to act because Wilder "imposed his unwanted sexual advances upon me by fondling my privates..." "I attacked Mr. Wilder essentially because he placed me in an awkward situation. I am not a homosexual and I do not appreciate homosexuals trying to force their perversion upon me. I therefore reacted violently."

Stucky said it was his opinion that Bowers and a co-defendant hand-picked Mr. Wilder as "what you thought was a perfect victim because you believed that no matter what you did, Mr. Bowers would not have the ability or desire to report those actions to law enforcement authorities.

"This crime has no explanation or justification in the court's mind. It is my responsibility in sentencing you to attempt to send a message to you that such behavior, such hatred, such violence on any citizen will not be tolerated in Kanawha County."

Bowers' co-defendant, 22-year-old Charles Frye, pleaded guilty to his part in the beating and testified for the state in Bowers' trial. Frye received a 10-year prison sentence.

SYDNEY, NSW. 25 Mar. 1999 SBN Mailing List, from Tom Dan.

I would also like to tell you about something more personal....about continued harrasment and vilification including a couple of Saturdays ago when the instigator called, "Tommy I've got a present for you", as he stood with his dick in his hand pissing against the fence.....later that evening my front windows were smashed when I was out..... Yes....the police were called. I later said to the local member "I have a democratic right to object....and I will not be intimidated". You see..... Sandra XXXX had said "They are really good friends of mine", and she has supported.....their Development Application amendment.

SEATTLE GAY NEWS – 9 May 1999

Groundbreaking study on woman-to-woman sexual violence launched Dr. Lori B. Girshick, sociologist and community activist, has begun a nationwide study on woman-to-woman sexual violence. The study is aimed at Lesbians, Bisexual women and Transgendered/Transsexual women. Girshick hopes to do for woman-to-woman sexual violence what researchers and activists have done for marital rap - challenging the invisibility of the act and seek public and legal recognition. A focus of Girshick's work is to understand what labels women use who are sexually assaulted by their female partners or dates. Do they call the violence sexual assault, sexual coercion or rape? The words some women use to describe their experience influence the actions they take to deal with their abuse. This work will contribute to the development of outreach efforts and support services of rape crisis centers and domestic violence agencies, and will help therapists and others who work with survivors of sexual violence. Girshick also hopes to challenge existing laws. She has authored two books, her latest is No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison (Northeastern University Press).

Ron Davies: I Am Bisexual

Former Welsh Secretary Ron Davies has admitted he is bisexual following allegations about his private life in a Sunday newspaper.

In a statement issued by his office, Mr Davies said: "Having discussed the matter with my wife, however, and in order to put a stop to the intolerable stream of lurid and inaccurate stories, I am left with no alternative but to confirm that I am, and have been for some time, bisexual."

The Labour MP and Labour Member of the Welsh Assembly made the comments following a story in the News of The World.

Mr Davies resigned from the Cabinet last year after he admitted to a "moment of madness" on Clapham Common which allegedly led to him being mugged in Brixton, south London.

No one was prosecuted in the case.

Mr Davies issued a statement in response to a double-page spread which carried photographs and alleged that he had exposed himself and indulged in a sex act near his home in Draethen, Mid Glamorgan.

The Caerphilly MP said: "Since I was attacked in Brixton last year there has been intensive on-going speculation about my private life.

"As I have said all along I was robbed and was the victim of a plausible and cunning individual. The statement which I gave to the police following that incident was a full and accurate account.

"Since my resignation I have found myself the subject of a number of untrue stories, sold by individuals purely for gain."

He said: "During the last week while walking and bird watching near my home I was approached by individuals who, on two separate occasions, attempted to engage me in conversation of a sexual nature. I ended the conversations and walked away. I now know that these were tabloid journalists who were clearly trying to entrap me."

Monday June 14, 1999, 7:26 AM

Labour Backs 'Bisexual' Ron Davies

Labour ex-Cabinet minister Ron Davies has won the support of local party workers after he countered newspaper allegations about his private life by admitting: "I'm bisexual."

Members of Caerphilly Labour Party said Mr Davies, who issued a personal statement after reports appeared in a Sunday newspaper, was a hard-working MP committed to Welsh devolution.

Their only regret was that he had not come out as a bisexual months ago.

The Westminster MP and Welsh Assembly Member has been subjected to repeated speculation about his sex life after he resigned from the Cabinet last October following a "moment of madness" on Clapham Common.

Mr Davies, then Welsh Secretary, told police he had been robbed and assaulted after offering to dine with strangers. No one was prosecuted in that case.

The News of the World made fresh allegations about Mr Davies's private behaviour in woodlands near his home at Draethen, near Caerphilly.

The MP immediately issued a statement in which he accused journalists of trying to entrap him.

But he added: "Having discussed the matter with my wife, however, and in order to put a stop to the intolerable stream of lurid and inaccurate stories, I am left with no alternative but to confirm that I am, and have been for some time, bisexual."

His statement, claimed he had been out walking and bird-watching when undercover journalists "attempted to engage me in conversation of a sexual nature".

News of the World editor Phil Hall said the story was followed up after the paper received information from a concerned parent.

References to Davis articles:

<http://www.yahoo.co.uk/headlines/19990613/news/929264660-2-1.html>

<http://www.yahoo.co.uk/headlines/19990614/news/929337980-9-1.html>

Send support to:

Write: Rt Hon Ron Davies
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SW1A 0AA United Kingdom
Phone: +44-171-219 3000

Labour Party Contacts

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Welsh Labour Party

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1 Cathedral Road,
Cardiff, CF1 9HA

Women's Pre-Conference - XIX ILGA World Conference

Dear friends:

The XIX ILGA World Conference will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa on September 19-26, 1999.

The ILGA Women's Secretariat has considered it important to organize a specific space, the Women's Pre-Conference on September 19, 1999. You will find enclosed a draft proposal (in progress) for this activity. We would appreciate a your comments or any reaction to this initiative.

We are looking forward to hearing from you. Warm regards,

Alejandra Sardá
WS

DRAFT PROGRAM document (in progress)

ILGA Women's Preconference --- One day Program

September 19, 1999 --- during the XX ILGA Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa (Sept. 18-26)

Location: (probably it will be the same as the Conf. itself, we're expecting confirmation by the Organizing Committee)

Women's Secretariat (Giney Villar - Womyn Supporting Womyn, Philippines- and Alejandra Sardá - Escrita en el Cuerpo, Argentina) plus Rebeca Sevilla, Jane Pantel - (Grupo Lésbico da Bahia, Brasil, Regional Secretariat ILGA Latin America) and the Organizing Committee based in South Africa.

1. WHAT DO WE DO?

We are women members of ILGA, lesbian and bisexual women. We are women from different regions, with an important experience gained through our work outside and inside ILGA's structure (Women's, Regional and General Secretaries). We are committed to promote women's visibility and equal participation in our organization.

During its 20 years of existence ILGA has improved their way of working and organizing. This process has confronted the imbalanced power relationship between gay men and lesbians. The social, political and economical changes have put women's organizations in a critical position. We are creating awareness about the need to develop more contents and planning campaigns for women's issues.

We believe that the XIX ILGA World Conference in South Africa can provide us an invaluable spirit and courage to reach agreements and actions in order to develop a more systematic way of work for our future. We invite you to join the Women's Pre-Conference day in South Africa.

2. HOW TO FIND US?

To let us know your suggestions and also to confirm your participation in the Women's Pre-Conference,

- You can contact the Women's Secretariat in Argentina,
Alejandra Sardá
Address: Guardia Vieja 4329 7mo. H (1192) Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Fax: (54 11) 4382 90 95
E-mail: escrita@arnet.com.ar

- ILGA Organizing Conference Coordinator in South Africa
Carrie Shelver
Address: Box 27811, Yeoville, 2143, SOUTH AFRICA
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E-mail: ilga@ncgle.org.za

3. DO YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AS ...a volunteer, translator, facilitator?

We can always use more volunteers to help with the organisation of the program. We offer a diverse, creative and exciting working environment. Please contact Alejandra via e-mail: escrita@arnet.com.ar or fax: (54 11) 4382 90 95 (If you hear a recorded message in Spanish, just wait for the signal and send your fax.)

4. PURPOSE OF THE WOMEN'S DAY

ILGA World Conferences offer unique opportunities for networking and exchanging with activists from all over the world. The organization's work for the next two years as well as all matters of institutional structure, is usually decided during World Conferences.

In this context, Women's Day will focus on:

- * Increasing women's participation
- * Evaluating women's secretariats and the role they play in the progress of lesbian and bisexual women's rights.
- * Formulating an strategic plan including:
 - two years plan of action at global and regional level
 - more dynamic way of networking
 - strengthening women's role at regional and global levels
 - the basic priorities and resources

5. PROGRAM LOGISTICS

- The working group will contribute to make sure that the programs are running smoothly and that logistics are taken care of.
- The women's corner will be set up by the Women's Secretariat in order to display information related to women's concerns and issues.
- The working group will support to facilitators and discuss possible areas for improvement.
- Workshop facilitators will raise specific questions in connection with the purpose of the roundtable. Each workshop will choose a minute-taker and person to report to the plenary.
- The working group will make sure that women's workshops programmed during the Conference take place and making sure that the whole focus of the program remains in tact.

6. THE PROGRAM CONTENT

Women's pre-conference day consists of three parts:

1. Plenary session: key-note speakers will provide analyses, tools and framework. We are looking for speakers from all regions, please send us your suggestions.
- 2: Workshops proposals: a number of working groups will be set up in order to raise possible suggestions, proposals, policies, actions according to the topic of the plenary. Each working group will need a facilitator, minute-taker and translator. Experienced facilitators and minute-takers are needed.
- 3: A complementary set of workshops during the ILGA Conference, including a Women's corner.

SPECIAL LETTER.....

Dear National Biways readers & ABN members,

I am writing to ask bisexual men and their partners to contact me so that I can learn more about the experience of bisexual men and their partners in the AIDS epidemic. I am writing for publication and also speaking publicly at forums about the experience of bisexual men and their partners in the AIDS epidemic.

AIDS workers and volunteers have frequently spoken of the problem of bisexual men who don't acknowledge bisexuality, who don't associate with gay culture and more broadly the silence of bisexual men. But this has often occurred in media discussions and forums where acknowledgement of the factors that discourage bisexual men from speaking, and a commitment to ensuring the space for bisexual men to speak for ourselves, has been absent.

I use the word bisexual in the broadest sense, including:

- people whose experience or behaviour could be described as bisexual, regardless of how they identify themselves, e.g. bisexual, straight, gay, queer, transgender, no labels, etc.;
- a person who has had significant sexual experiences with individuals of both genders whilst their experiences of sexual attraction in terms of gender may vary greatly;
- a person who may be attracted to both men and women whilst their behaviour may be monogamous, non-monogamous or celibate.

I believe that bisexual men and their partners have an important role in the AIDS epidemic, in helping others to understand our experience and in helping other bisexual men and their partners in the complex challenges we face. We also have a role in the training of health and community workers and as volunteers and employees in AIDS and broader health organisations.

I first began volunteer work with an AIDS organisation about a decade ago. During that time I became concerned about the unhelpful discussions about bisexual men, including our silence. This coincided with a frequent lack of interest in ensuring the space for bisexual men to speak, and a lack of acknowledgment of the enormous contribution of bisexual men and their partners in AIDS organisations.

Since then I have had informal discussions with a number of bisexual men and women partners of bisexual men and also with health workers and researchers in Australia and overseas about these issues. I have contributed at a number of forums including giving a presentation at a major sexual health centre that was very well received. I've written an article for the National AIDS Bulletin, 'Bisexual People Speaking for Themselves', November 1992. I have also spoken on national radio again with positive feedback. I am a member of the Australian Bisexual Network and participated in the three national Bi conferences held in Perth and Sydney since 1992.

It would be very helpful in terms of speaking more knowledgeably about the experience of bisexual men and their partners in the AIDS epidemic, if I were to speak with a greater range of bisexual men and women partners and men partners of bisexual men.

I hope to speak with people who have HIV and also with people who don't. I'm particularly interested in people's experiences of health organisations including mainstream hospitals, sexual health centres and AIDS organisations including gay community AIDS organisations. If you have had contact with any organisations of this kind for support, safe sex programs, health care, treatments or as volunteers or employees, were they helpful or unhelpful, constructive or hostile in their responses to your experiences or concerns?

I am also interested in how people feel about the representation of bisexual men in the Media. Health providers and researchers generally acknowledge that it has often been negative and hostile. What do you think? Has the Media representation of bisexual men helped bisexual men and their partners deal better with the complex challenges we face in the AIDS epidemic, or has it made it more difficult?

I hope to be contacted by bisexual men and the women partners and male partners of bisexual men who:

- are of English speaking and non-English speaking backgrounds;
- are living with HIV and those not;
- are from urban and country areas from around Australia.

I also hope the partners, family members and friends of bisexual men and their partners who have died, will also contact me. I believe that the

experiences of those who have died and those close to them, form an essential part of this project.

I will respond to people's communication with a fundamental commitment to integrity and confidentiality. In writing for publication and speaking publicly, I will discuss people's experiences in such a way as to protect their privacy and identity.

Though I have received encouragement and support from many health workers in this project, it is not publicly funded. I am funding it myself because I believe the issues are important. Because of this I cannot afford a 1800 number but ask people to ring me between 8.00am and 11am or between 2.00pm and 8.00pm Eastern Standard Time on any day including weekends. Because of varying commitments including work contracts, there may be times when I am not there. If the phone is not answered by me, a message will give the times when I will be there to take calls over the following week. If you are ringing STD and would prefer me to ring you back, I will be happy to do that.

I hope you will help me with this project and contact me on:

Tel. **03-9439 6331**
between 8am & 11am or 2pm & 8pm.

Or write: **Scott Anderson**
PO Box 37
ELTHAM
VIC 3095

Many Thanks,
Sincerely,
Scott Anderson.

Spouse Support Network

The Spouse Support Network has a new web page address:

<http://www.ssnetwk.org>

Another LGBT Resource Web Site

<http://hometown.aol.com/lihamptons/index.html>

Journal of Bisexuality

The Journal of Bisexuality is a brand new quarterly journal scheduled for publication in the year 2000 by Haworth Press, internationally known in the publishing industry.

It's purpose is to provide information for the educated lay public on the topic of bisexuality, a sexual orientation which is larger than either the gay or lesbian orientation. As the subculture for bisexuality is quite small (though growing rapidly), there are very few outlets for providing credible information about all of the aspects of this complex orientation. Obviously, filling that gap is one of the major goals of The Journal of Bisexuality.

Should anyone wish to contribute articles or research, they may contact Fritz Klein via the Bisexual Options Web Page or Wayne Roberts from the Australian Bisexual Network. The deadline for the 1st issue is rapidly approaching, so do let us know soon if you want to contribute.

Bi The Way... (from the USA)

Another bisexual resource on the web, not to be confused with BTW from Adelaide.

<http://www.bisexual.org/bitheway/>

Woman-To-Woman Sexual Violence

Seattle Gay News - May 9: Groundbreaking study on woman-to-woman sexual violence launched Dr. Lori B. Girshick, sociologist and community activist, has begun a nationwide study on woman-to-woman sexual violence. The study is aimed at Lesbians, Bisexual women and Transgendered/Transsexual women. Girshick hopes to do for woman-to-woman sexual violence what researchers and activists have done for marital rap - challenging the invisibility of the act and seek public and legal recognition. A focus of Girshick's work is to understand what labels women use who are sexually assaulted by their female partners or dates. Do they call the violence sexual assault, sexual coercion or rape? The words some women use to describe their experience influence the actions they take to deal with their abuse. This work will contribute to the development of outreach efforts and support services of rape crisis centers and domestic violence agencies, and will help therapists and others who work with survivors of sexual violence. Girshick also hopes to challenge existing laws. She has authored two books, her latest is No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison (Northeastern University Press).

Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD)

The first ever international Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD) will take place September 23, 1999. CBD is a day of rejoicing, merriment, fun, frolicking, and general tomfoolery to commemorate in our Bisexual communities. More importantly, its a day for all Bisexuals (and Bi allies) to celebrate their lives.

Whether activist, student, spouse, child, parent, non-out, 9to5'r, or party animal, we live in a monosexual dominated world. Despite this, we discover our identity. Each day we face this bias, yet manage to hold onto our sexuality. CBD is a day to celebrate our survival. A day to enjoy how incredibly fabulous we are.

Events ranging for film festivals to marches, dances, parties, pot lucks, slumber parties, are being planned by several Bisexual groups around the globe. Join in the discussion! An event's bulletin board is open on the web at:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~madamec/index.html>

An email-based discussion is also available and open to anyone interested. To subscribe to this list, go to the following web page:

<http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/biday>

Is this the end?

By Renata

All I want is to be loved and held in your embrace
Instead I am given your empty promises in its place.

Your eyes gape at me with such sexual desire
Your hands stir my blood hot with fire.
Yet in your eyes I see no passion from the depths of your soul
And as your hands lay upon me they leave me nostalgic and cold.

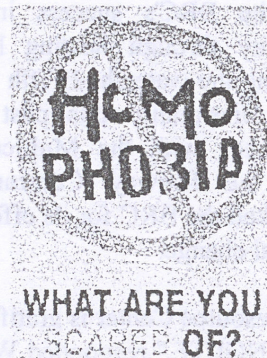
You say you love me for the comfort I bestow
For my touches, for my friendship and the caring that I show.
Why, my body aches and yearns for you to do the same
As with others you have done. Why with me are you so lame?

Is it love that has left you so enfeebled and so scared?
Incapable of commitment, a future with me to share?
This impotency has disheartened me, this you do know
And while I love you with my heart I am afraid that I must go.

All I wanted was to be loved and held in your embrace
Instead you gave me your empty promises in its place.

2QT 2B STR8 - Logan

A support & social group for young men aged 16 to 25 years who are or think they may be bisexual or gay in and around the Logan City area of South East Queensland. Contact Ian or Vicki for more information on 3208 8199.



A Leunig Poem

Come sit down beside me
I said to myself
And although it doesn't make sense,
I held my own hand
As a small sign of trust
And together I sat on the fence.

(Could this be a bisexual at the Mardi Gras Party? Thanks Christine & Sam.)

If you have any poems or stories, send them in and we will see if we can publish them in NBM.

BOSTON'S BISEXUAL RESOURCE CENTER RECEIVES MAJOR SERVICE AWARD AT NGLTF "CREATING CHANGE" CONFERENCE

Boston, Massachusetts. -- November 17, 1998 --The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) has received the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Community Service Award, given for service to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities. This recognition marks the first time that a bisexual organization has won the prestigious award.

Kerry Lobel, NGLTF's Executive Director, presented the award to the Boston activists on Saturday, November 14, at the Creating Change Conference in Pittsburgh, recognizing the BRC's contributions in educating both the heterosexual and homosexual communities about bisexuality and other forms of sexual diversity. In her remarks she praised the wide variety of resources about bisexuality that the BRC provides, including the Bisexual Resource Guide, the www.biresource.org website, the phone, mail, and email information services, and speakers on bisexual issues. She acknowledged the BRC's success in building a strong community through hosting local support groups, organizing the watershed Fifth International Conference on Bisexuality this past spring, and working in alliance with the Multicultural AIDS Coalition and the Fenway Community Health Center, and thanked the BRC for its efforts to further progressive social change.

"The Bisexual Resource Center is gratified to receive this award from NGLTF," responded Wayne Bryant, international conference organizer and author of "Bisexual Characters in Film: From Anais to Zee". "The award shows how bisexual and transgender issues, and indeed issues of sexual freedom in general, are now being seen as core issues by progressive national gay and lesbian rights groups. At the same time, it recognizes how much energy bisexual people have contributed to the advancement of human rights."

The Fifth International Conference on Bisexuality, held on the campus of Harvard University in early April, 1998, showcased the cultural diversity of the bisexual movement with over 140 different workshops, panels, and performances for bisexuals and their allies. Interest in the conference ran so high that a record 910 attendees arrived, 30% over the expected number, coming from fifteen different countries around the world. The BRC, in collaboration with BiNet USA, the Harvard Lesbian,

Bisexual, and Gay Graduate Students, the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, and other organizations, organized a worldwide all-volunteer team to plan and host the conference. Organizers in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, are preparing to host the Sixth International Conference on Bisexuality in 2000.

Currently, BRC co-founder Robyn Ochs is leading another team of worldwide volunteers to complete the 1999 edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide, a 250-page publication listing contact information for all known bisexual and bi-inclusive organizations, groups, and internet resources worldwide. The Guide, which includes informative articles and listings of bisexual books and films, connects isolated bisexuals with a supportive community that respects and understands their sexuality. It is the only internationally-focused resource of its kind currently available. The new edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide [\$11.95 from BRC, PO Box 400639, Cambridge MA 02140] will be available in January 1999 and can be ordered now; see the BRC website at <http://www.biresource.org> for more details.

Previous recipients of NGLTF's Community Service Award have included Tim Gill, founder of Quark Software and the philanthropic Gill Foundation, Ninia Baehr and Genora Dancel, co-plaintiffs in the Hawaii marriage case, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. Other recipients of this year's awards included Patricia Cramer, whose rural Pennsylvania bar (the Casa Nova) has been subject to continuous protests, harassment, and violent attacks by the KKK and other conservative groups for over a year, and the Audre Lorde Center in New York.

ABOUT THE BISEXUAL RESOURCE CENTER

Founded in 1985 and based in Boston, Massachusetts, the Bisexual Resource Center is a non-

profit educational organization dedicated to providing information and educational resources about bisexuality to interested parties worldwide. The BRC publishes the Bisexual Resource Guide and other educational material, supplies information through phone, email, and mail, and maintains a website of extensive resources at <http://www.biresource.org>. In addition to the Fifth International Conference on Bisexuality, the Center has hosted six regional conferences on bisexuality and three BiFests since 1984. The BRC hosts social and support groups in Boston to serve the local bisexual community, and provides speakers willing to talk with organizations about bisexuality and bisexual issues.

New GLBT Group set up in Zambia

The newly formed vibrant and proactive GLB organisation is already increasing its membership list. The organisation that has been formed is called Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexuals and Transgender persons Association (LEGATRA) of Zambia.

The existence of persons of this cultural diversity and orientation is proving to be an indigenous African condition.

But African societies are highly homophobic, discriminatory and give less favourable treatment to persons who exhibit homosexual orientation.

There is a sensitised perception that gayism and lesbianism are European problems. This amounts to racism. Politicians including senior Government officials have been fostering this kind of notion even in front of diplomats.

The worse scenario is that the society is highly violent, repressive and exerts a high degree of intolerance, and a religiously and culturally right opposition.

Alfred Zulu
LEGATRA Programmes Manager

Bi Friendly Ewan McGregor

From *VANITY FAIR*, December 1998.

Ewan McGregor's a very cool straight guy. He may look like the sort of shiftless youth you see lolling around the escalators in shopping malls, but this 27-year-old - with a vaguely 70s shag and a

cigarette dangling from his lips - is being hailed as the biggest thing to come out of Scotland since Sean Connery...

"There's no one else with Ewan's sort of intensity around," says Todd Haynes, the director of McGregor's latest, *Velvet Goldmine*...

Velvet Goldmine also gives us the actor in the throes of gay sex..."Ewan was very cool about the sex scenes," director Todd Haynes says. "I'm not sure an American actor of his age would have been so relaxed. ..When he was doing scenes with Christian Bale, the two of them would stay in an embrace between takes, and continue to be tender to one another, shutting out the crew."

"It's actually much more exciting being in a sex scene with a man," McGregor says. "It's something outside of my normal experience. It's another example of an extreme situation - snogging a man."...

...McGregor is taking a bath with his daughter, Clara. (Wife) Eve is making dinner and talking about *Velvet Goldmine*. "There he is, having a gay relationship with two different men - I didn't think I could relate to that. But actually I found it rather sexy."...

Homicide - Life on the Streets

The American crime drama currently screening in Australia on the Seven Network will not run to a new series production, NBC has decided. In October last year in the USA and recently here, Det. Tim Bayliss came out as bisexual.

In the coming out episode of *Homicide*, Det. Tim Bayliss (Kyle Secor) asks Det. Renee Sheppard (played by actress Michael Michele) out on a date. Renee confusingly asks Bayliss if he is gay, having heard precinct gossip. He denies being gay but says he recently slept "with a guy, (we had) sex...a couple times." Then asked to describe himself, Bayliss says he's "bi-curious." To which Renee answers that she is bi-curious as well and has in fact dated "bi-guys" before. After the matter-of-fact exchange, they agree to go out. Currently, "Homicide" is the only current primetime television show with a bisexual character.

News EXTRA

I'm not gay enough for the Mardi Gras

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a smiling man with a beard and mustache, wearing a patterned shirt. He is holding a sign that reads "Marilyn Fairly". The background is dark and textured.

Ref: S121866D www.euroindia.com.au February 1, 1999 53

By TERRY SMYTH

Mr. Darbes, who identifies with the gay community, was outraged when his membership application was rejected after he declared his homosexuality.

"Our members decided in an extraordinary meeting in 1975 that membership of our organization be essentially restricted to lebanese and gay men," he said.

"We're entitled to do that under discrimination laws."

Mr. McLaughlin is quoted in the guide for this month's March Ciss as saying that federal "inspired to include and involve others wherever they

borderline. "Lambians and gay men remain the same right as a lot of other groups... in their boundaries around some of the things we do because it's very

"And the boundaries of the area are restricted to the question of membership."

However, these restrictions are ones to be maintained.

Mr. Ochsner was surprised "because he won't pay," Mr. McLaughlin said.

"But these things are difficult to draw boundaries around."

It was Elderly Island Ochsner would be asked to reconsider the issue within the next few months, he said.

FULL REPORT Page 62.



OUTRAGED: Deen Darbar

The President and members of the Board of Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras recently meet with representatives of Sydney's Bisexual community and the Australian Bisexual Network. At the discussion table, both groups spoke friendly about the issue of Bisexuals being rejected from membership of Mardi Gras and possible ways to overcome this issue. It was indicated, the negative press and divisions in the community over the issue, does not benefit either group. Bisexuals have had a long history of involvement in Mardi Gras and many are members and volunteers. The current Mardi Gras Board indicated that if they are re-elected at the August AGM, they would put the issue to the membership at a Special General Meeting. It is not sure if they would openly endorse a change in the Articles that would see bisexual applicants for membership treated the same as gay, lesbian and transgender applicants. Their opposition is New Magic which has indicated they will support bisexual inclusion. ABN encourages all to apply for membership and attend the AGM.

14

Bisexuals take case to ADB meeting

VANESSA McQUARRIE

Bisexuals rejected as members of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras were due to raise their concerns at an Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB) community consultation meeting last night.

Bi Pride Australia founder Glenn Vassallo planned to argue that his particular "flavour" of homosexuality – bisexuality, which is not included in the Anti-Discrimination Act – had been discriminated against.

"Bisexuals feel our exclusion from Mardi Gras is a most obvious example of institutionalised discrimination," he told the *Star Observer*. "This is happening because we are a minority group within the mainstream gay and lesbian community."

"It is very similar to what has happened, and still happens, to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in mainstream Australian society."

Vassallo said although he had considered lodging a "test case" com-

plaint with the ADB, by the time it was heard (in approximately nine months), a new Mardi Gras board may be in place.

Prior to the meeting Mardi Gras president David McLachlan said he had not received any formal notification nor any request that Mardi Gras send a representative to the consultation.

Mardi Gras' board also met last night, and McLachlan intended to put the issue of bisexual members on the agenda.

"We are looking at whether there is an

approach we can take that is consistent with our current Articles [of Association]."

Under the Articles, the board cannot admit non-gay, lesbian or transgender identified people unless it is persuaded that the admission of that person carries with it "no prospect of diminishing the essential character of Mardi Gras as a gay and lesbian organisation".

Applicants who indicate they are bisexual or heterosexual on their application forms must "state succinctly what

special factors might persuade the board that [they] should be admitted ..."

McLachlan said if the board decides the Articles – which were approved by members – are not flexible, the issue will be taken back to the membership.

"Certainly, I'm intending that there will be a public forum, and if the sense is that we should re-visit the Articles, then that will occur."

The ADB regularly holds consultations with the gay and lesbian community. ■

Same old line

The history of anti-gay bisexual politics in Australia is as old as the modern gay movement. From the movement's early days, when it was still relatively fragile, straights and many who identified as bisexual peddled the line that bisexuality was superior to so-called mono-sexuality. Bisexuality was what everybody should aim for. A person could not be whole unless all aspects of sexuality were "liberated": not just the homosexuality in heterosexuals, but also the heterosexuality in homosexuals.

On the other hand, within the movement it was assumed and accepted that "gay" did not mean that one had to be 100 per cent homosexual in one's practice. So a person could be having a diverse sexual practice and still assume a gay identity. Strictly

speaking, bisexual identity was redundant. In practice it was constructed explicitly against gay identity.

This is not ancient history. When the present bisexual debate broke out just a few years ago, the above anti-gay arguments were peddled out again. At a forum organised by the Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby, norrie mAy-welby, from the panel, spoke contemptuously of "mono-sexuals", meaning us homosexuals, male and female. When I challenged her from the floor she backed down, saying she didn't mean it that way.

Still speaking from the floor, I tried to explain the social distinction between heterosexuality being privileged and homosexuality being oppressed. Kate, a spokesperson for the Bisexual Network, also on the panel, lashed out at me saying that I must be scared of women.

What is striking in all this is that

the bisexual line was nothing other than a rehash of the anti-gay psychiatric ideology and practice which diagnosed us as being sick and suffering from interrupted development (and then proceeded to "cure" us through such wonderful methods as lobotomy and aversion therapy). The difference today is that, a few years down the track, bisexual activists realise it is not wise to say what they really think. So instead we get feel-good buzz words like "inclusion" and "diversity" to fool people into supporting them. In reality their political agenda hasn't changed.

— Michael Schembri, *Lesbian and Gay Solidarity*

No bisexual bias

Glenn Vassallo and company still don't get it or, worse, refuse to (SSO 451). The NSW Anti-Discrimination Legislation is superior to that of other states precisely because it offers protection from discrimination only on the basis of homosexuality. The reason should be obvious. The dominant sexuality in society is heterosexuality. The stigmatised

one is homosexuality. It is homosexuality which is at the receiving end of discrimination. The person discriminated against can be a gay man or a lesbian. He/she can be a bisexual, who is discriminated against because of the homosexual component of his/her bisexuality. He/she can be a straight person who is perceived to be homosexual. Therefore the legislation, as it stands, covers bisexuals as well.

Of course, it may be that some bisexual activists want to include "bisexuality" under the legislation in order to use it against gay and

lesbian organisations such as the Mardi Gras. This is a useless exercise. Voluntary organisations are exempt from the legislation, which is aimed at discrimination by large corporations and government bodies.

If the change was to be made, it would not offer bisexuals anything that the present legislation doesn't offer. On the other hand it would leave us wide open to attacks from straights – another stick to beat us with. Is that really what the bisexual activists want?

— Mannie De Saxe, *Belmore*

Bi support

I marched in 1978 and almost every year since, and have been a Mardi Gras member since its formal inception. In 1978 I was heterosexually married with three children, so I could have identified myself as "bisexual". But I chose not to. Then, and since, I have known men and women who did choose to call themselves "bisexual" and who have made great contributions to gay rights. They are part of our community. They, too, are Mardi Gras.

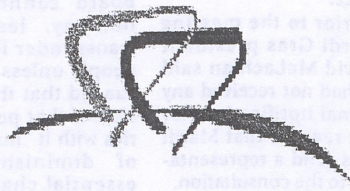
Now I read that someone has been refused Mardi Gras membership under its archaic and ill-informed Charter. I understand Mardi Gras is looking at "future directions" and welcoming greater community consultation and participation.

Then let them start right here, with membership.

All our queer brothers and sisters are part of us and our community. They must have full (not partial) entitlement as eligible members – gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.

Will Mardi Gras kindly pull its thumb out and review this offensive and divisive membership decision now, and then get on with the job we expect from them – giving our community a focus of unity, strength, diversity and celebration.

— Lee Andresen, *Ballina*



Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers aged 18 years and over are needed for a study into the lives of people who identify as bisexual.

The interview requires 1 to 2 hours of time and covers areas such as self-identity, coming out as bisexual, relationships with partners, friends, family, and community.

For those living in Melbourne, interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you to ensure your privacy, and can be done by telephone if preferred.

For those living outside Melbourne, interviews are done by telephone at no expense to you.

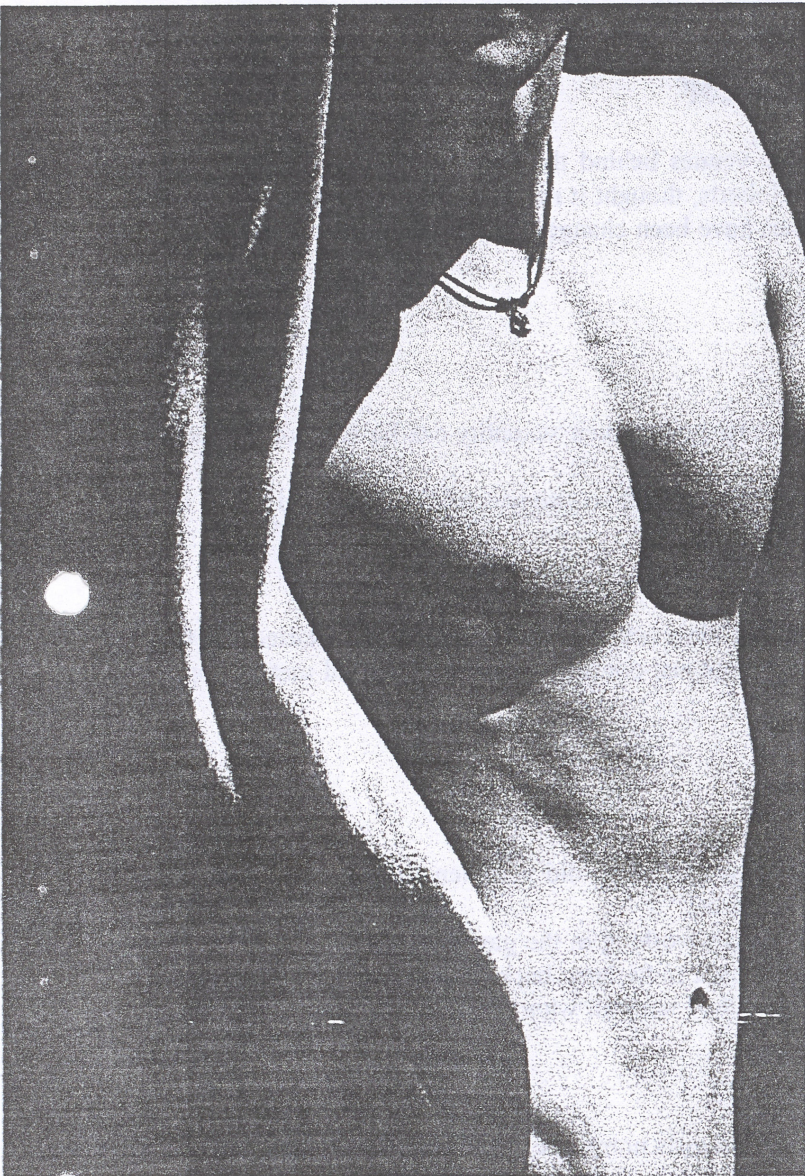
Identities will not be revealed in the research process or in the final results, so confidentiality is assured.

The study is being conducted as part of a PhD in Sociology at Monash University, Clayton, Victoria.

For further information or to express your interest, please call Kirsten McLean on **03 9531 2851** or e-mail her at: **kemcl1@student.monash.edu.au**

web page: **<http://biresearch.faithweb.com>**

(If you are calling from outside Melbourne, I will return your call straight away if needed so you do not incur the call cost.)



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E-mail to silba@magna.com.au

INTERVIEW

Craig, not his real name, works at some of Brisbane's gay venues behind the bar. As a young bisexual person working in the gay scene, National Biways editor, Wayne Roberts, thought it might be interesting to interview him and find out what it is like working in the gay scene. Names have been changed in this interview, but the facts are true.

W: If you don't mind me asking, what is your age?

C: 19

W: So, Originally from NSW and I guess for a lot of young people their sexuality can be an issue for them in their teens.

C: NSW, Yeah. I grew up in an isolated community on an island and no one was gay on the island so it's like a big shock. Something that I don't go back home and talk about.

W: So how did you deal with it?

C: I went to Cairns! Hehehe, I didn't realise until I was in Cairns actually. It was only when I started meeting a few people and it just kind of happened, you know. I was just out there exploring life and met a couple of gay guys and thought that this looked all right.

W: Give it a go. I think it happens to a lot of people.

C: Yeah

W: It hits them all of a sudden. So when you met these guys in Cairns, did you then feel that you were gay or how did you come to the conclusion of where you are now?

C: Time, just really dealt it. I just spent some time in Cairns working in the gay scene and the clubs up there and I had my casual interactions up there. Then I went back to Sydney, back to the island and it all just died and, see, down there I just interacted with the guys and they were all wharf builders and macho blokes so it was back to that.

W: And what about the girls in your life?

C: On the island there aren't many, unfortunately, either, but girls in my life in the club scene, there are lots of them, 'cause they come and go so that's all right.

W: So you're attracted to people, not necessarily guys or girls. How do your other peers around you view your attractions with the people of varying genders?

C: Yeah, attracted to people. It depends, the more I drink...the camper I am I really and especially if I'm in the clubs where I'm working, it is umm, you know, after a while you don't mind giving a hug and stuff, otherwise I usually hold a bit of a butch background. I just keep it quiet if someone is with me, I don't go publishing it, that is one of the reason why I try and stay out of the gay club scene a bit. Because, it is so, 'I've had you', it's very publicised and I don't want it to be like that. Its more like I say, if I met someone they're lucky to meet me I suppose because it takes a special person I think.

W: Yeah, right. Okay. So you've got a male and female partner at the present time.

C: At the present moment, yes, I do.

W: How do they identify their sexuality? Is it the classic "everyone's Bi" or is it the "gay male and straight female"?

C: Straight female, yeah.

W: Gay Male?

- C: No partner's Bi, Bi male and Straight female.
- W: How did she come to know you, cause people assume that straight women just can't handle gay sex, bi sex.
- C: She doesn't mind, see she works in the gay club scene as well.
- W: So she is a queer straight?
- C: Yeah, a queer straight "laugh". So it doesn't bother her at all, most of her friends, or a large number of her friends are gay, so, I suppose to find someone attracted to her as well is a bit of a bonus. Because that's the thing, she walks into the clubs, its different to go into a straight club 'cause everyone looks at you when you walk into a straight club and a girl walking into a gay club since I have been working there, they don't really give much attention.
- W: How long have you been going out together with each of them?
- C: Umm, since I have been back in Brisbane, which has been about a month now. So I've known "John" for 6-12 months now since I've lived in Cairns.
- W: Ok. Is it a 3-way relationship?
- C: No it is very much a separate relationship between "John" and myself and "Julie" and myself.
- W: Ok, Because some people have triads. There are a lot of Bi people into polyfidelity, it's like multiple relationships, multiple partner relationships and things, it's like that saying 'bisexual's want their cake and be able to eat it too!' You know, the so called, greedy bisexuals, and this and that, but they're quite legitimate relationships in their own. Where do you see yourself heading in the future?
- C: I am honestly not sure, I am just at the stage now where I've got a couple of careers taking off and if I go my way who knows. A lot of places in the gay scene don't seem as really open, not like a club where you automatically assume that someone there, have the inclinations, you can't walk onto a building site and go eney meny miney mo. I will just wait and see.
- W: And with your current relationships, do you feel they are stable at the present time?
- C: With "John" and I, it is more of a best friend situation, we go out together and pick-up girls and we go out together, go home together, you know, it depends on what goes on really. We just love having fun together and the time we spend together is precious.
- W: So, you have open relationships?
- C: Yeah. But we both know what's going on all the time and that's what holds us together I think, because we're such good friends, and living together. As long as we know what's going on and we know each other well enough to know what the other person is doing so it just works out.
- W: And the same with your girlfriend? She knows what's going on?
- C: She knows what's going on with "John" yeah, now I'm with "Julie" I've stop with the other girls.
- W: Does she have a sort of open relationship if she wants to see other partners?
- C: Basically, if its gonna happen, I really rely on communication and if she wants someone else, just tell me so, so it doesn't pop up in a conversation with someone else and I get the shock of my life, you know? As long as I know what's going on, it's ok, I don't own anybody.
- W: How do you feel about people that identify as Bisexual, you know, do you feel that identity is irrelevant. Some people really view people identifying as bisexuals as being like halfway, even.
- C: They got the best of both.
- W: Some people see it as a political statement.

- C: I try and stay out of that gay/bi/straight thing cause it just causes to many hassles and there are to many people out there that put too much emphasis on where you are and I think if they can't handle where you are, it doesn't matter anyway.
- W: Well in Sydney, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has a clause where the bisexual identified and straight identified people need to prove why they should be granted membership. One would assume that proof would be their involvement in the community, but its been shown that that's not enough, that they still reject bisexual applications.
- C: What do they need, Photos?
- W: Yeah, I guess, "laugh" but if someone identifies as gay or lesbian or transgender they get automatic membership, it seems to me that just encourages people to lie.
- C: I think that would be me, if I filled out the form. I would be lying too, I am surprised they actually cause to much hassle, I would have thought as an elite little group they would have a lot easier membership.
- W: How do you find the gay venues to work in like in Cairns and here, and so on.
- C: Fun, there's so much more fun, than straight clubs at least I think anyway, because everyone is so open you can just be yourself basically. I think straight clubs, I dunno, I've got the saying - It's got to be bonds like the shirts, the only shirts I wear, I don't wear polo shirts because I don't like polo, sport or anything like that. Just because you can afford it, that doesn't mean you are a better person.
- W: Exactly
- C: And in the straight club scene there is too much emphasis on what you are wearing as to whom you are and I think also in the gay scene but there's not as much.
- W: Tends to be quite a bit more in the gay scene I think.
- C: At least you know everyone is gay not like in the straight scene, there not pretending to be famous or anything like that, and you know, whom they are anyway.
- W: Yeah, How do you find, well, like being a sex object?
- C: I enjoy it, I really enjoy it, its fun, I enjoy making people smile and if people get a buzz of watching me work, then good on em, that's what I am there for. That is what I get paid for, if they were not enjoying it they would be somewhere else doing it anyway.
- W: Well yeah, that's true, I just wondered how you feel about it personally, rather than just part of an occupation.
- C: As long as it doesn't get taken overboard, I have had a couple of instances where its gone too far, as the bosses have promoted me personally, a bit rude, but we will go into that in a moment if you want, as long as its under control.
- W: Do you feel that there is too much emphasis in the gay scene on young youthful and beautiful? In the staff area I mean.
- C: Oh, In the staff, yes, basically. I walked into this club in Brisbane and I was rotten drunk, had food all over me cause I just had their free BBQ. I just asked if there was any work going and basically all the staff came up to me straight away afterwards and said you got the job, I didn't even have to go for the interview. You know it has got to do with the look, but then that's what people come to see so.
- W: Yeah I understand that. Its just that you often get the impression that, well its not so much equal opportunity in the venues.
- C: Definitely Not, Definitely Not

W: Yet, the whole thing about gay rights, is equal opportunity, yet its very divided within the community, as whats perceived. You don't often see very many Asians working in the scene and so on and so forth, as you do in Sydney.

C: It's the further up north you go.

W: I guess. Is there anything more you want to add, any sort of comments, statements or things you have observed that relate to your sexuality?

C: I don't want to be gay, I like being Bisexual. I don't want to be a gay male because of the amount of crap that goes on basically like I said earlier. In the club scene, if your with someone they trash you after a week then go around telling everyone that they've had you. That's not what I want to get involved in, I think that is disappointing in the gay scene.

W: But that can also happen with the straight males as well with the girls.

C: That's the thing, its all males, it's a male thing.

W: It's a masculinity thing, proving one's masculinity whether you are straight or gay.

C: Back to masculinity, Growing up in the community where I did, where everyone is very much working with their hands and working with their bodies. I don't like girlie queens much, I don't mind if they are a bit feminine but when they start acting like females. Drag Queens are exception of course.

W: Well they're a bit different.

C: Yeah, but when you see a guy going around acting like a 12yo girl, I think its stupid. I mean, what are they doing with themselves, what type of life have they got? They're not going to get anywhere, I don't think, anyway.

W: Unless they go into the drag queen scene later on.

C: That's it.

W: Or a gender change.

C: That's the only downside, I see on the gay community, is things like that. That's where I think the gay scene gets a bad reputation, in the straight scene as in girlie poofs.

W: That's the impression that was given from the 60's, homosexuals were all feminine, then of course that changed basically from the 70s and 80's onwards to the 90's. 'Where all the gays are macho, can't you see the leather shine', then everyone started going to gyms and pumping up so now, there's a totally different perceived image of a gay male. Now the girlie queeny ones don't really fit into the scene as much any more. I think you often see in gay adverts, people are looking for a straight acting, straight looking guy, but they don't particularly want someone that doesn't identify as gay.

C: Yeah you see, that is another thing.

W: It's really strange, they want straight acting, straight looking, but they want gay.

C: When I first came to Brisbane, they asked me at the interview, I told the boss and the owner of the club I was Bisexual, but I said to keep it to themselves. And I had a bit of a laugh, because I told everyone I was 22, because I could get away with it, it got me a bit more respect in the bar and bits and pieces, and that I'm straight. A lot of people think like that, they try and conquer you and bits and pieces but you can't keep a secret for too long. Now the bosses basically said, tell everyone you are gay cause that's what they want, they want to hear that, once again, back to the bodies and stuff, that they want to see that's what they want, so basically you got to put it to them.

W: How do you think the clients would react if they knew you were Bi and not gay, would they react any different?

C: Back to I'm the person I am, and if they don't like it, you know, I think a few people in the gay scene are like, what are you doing in a gay club if your straight? A lot of people I have met are like that but then

they're the ones that should be all for straight people coming into it, cos all the gay people want to do is penetrate into and be treated openly in the straight scene.

W: So they should be the same, do you find much of a difference between the Cairns scene and the Brisbane scene?

C: Cairns scene, is very, umm, you know everyone very quickly, especially working in the clubs, although, I know a lot of people now only after working in Brisbane for a short time. But, it's a lot closer knit community in Cairns, just the venue size, that's about all, they need a new venue in Cairns.

W: Do you find people are more open and/or a lot more sincere than what they can be in large cities?

C: Yeah, they can I think, coming from my home town, I had to watch myself. When I moved into the big city of course, I didn't have the protection of the community, as such and in Cairns one thing is a lot of people go to Cairns to get away from the Scene in Sydney and Brisbane, get up to tropical weather and just relax. That's how you met a lot of people up there, they were up there to get away from the scene and just to live their lives. The club scene can become very overwhelming, It can become your life. Like the Brisbane club scene, people live their lives around the club scene. Cairns is good. People take that step-out and still remain themselves.

W: We might leave it at that. Thankyou.



This happy face (left) was snapped by Fritz Klein at the Southern Californian Bisexual Conference party earlier this year.

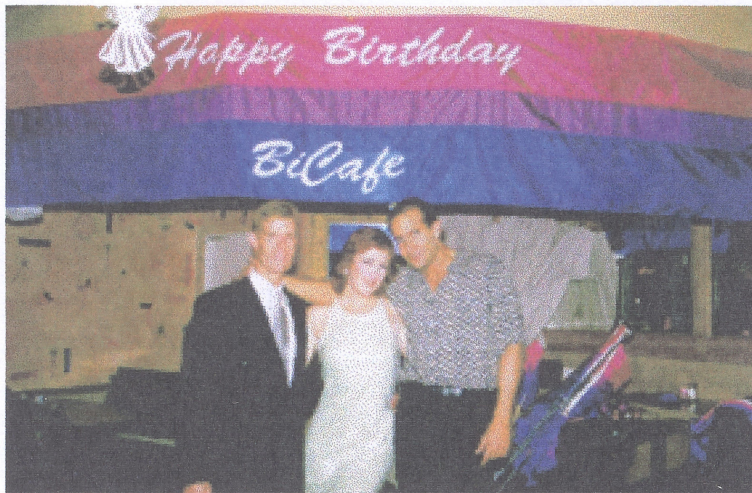
ABN is hoping to hold a Masquerade Party on September 25th as part of our Celebrate Bisexuality Day events.

Watch for details in Brisbane press & on our web page.

Bisexuals sure know how to party.

Here's Belinda sweeping Options performer, Trixie, off her feet at Bar Bi in Brisbane on June 12th.





Also in the USA, BiCafe celebrated their Birthday with a big party in Florida.

The new Bisexual Pride flags and banners were everywhere. Here we have Michael Page (right). Some may remember Michael when he was in Sydney for BiCon 3.



The Bisexual Community gather for the 1999 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.



At one of our Bar Bi nights held late last year at the Rat & Parrot Hotel, at which we farewelled Julie, our friendly bar person.



Above is one of our Bi cyber friends, Khalid, from Morocco, North Africa.



Dusty Springfield

The British singer, Dusty Springfield who was described by Rolling Stone magazine as Britain's best ever pop singer, died of breast cancer on March 2nd 1999.

During her singing career, Springfield was quite open about her bisexuality.

Above is Michelle from Melbourne who climbed Mt. Coolum during the ABN Bi Camp late last year.



Can Transsexuals Marry In Australia?

Following an article reproduced in NBM last year, Ian from Beaufort, Victoria tells us Transsexuals in Australia cannot marry people of their birth sex. Many still have no rights under the law and legislation in WA to allow them to change their birth certificates, has stalled in the Lower House.

Some of the girls at Bar Bi on June 12th 1999 now held at Options Nightclub.

Queensland paper goes GLBT

The fortnightly Queensland Queer Community newspaper, BrotherSister, earlier this year joined it's Victorian namesake in expanding it's front page masthead to include the word, Bi. Victoria changed it's last year. BrotherSister Queensland went one step better and now reads "gay, lesbian, bi & transgender news, entertainment, culture & clubbing". Both BrotherSister newspapers are the only papers to have expanded their logos to reflect the diversity of their readership and of the Queer Community. Congratulations to BrotherSister Queensland and Victoria.

Bisexual Community Honours Its Own with the 1999 Bisexual Awards

In 1996 the Australian Bisexual Network instituted annual Awards to acknowledge the contributions and support of people, groups and services to the advancement of the Bisexual Community in Australia. Now in their fourth year, the *Australian Bisexual Community Advancement Awards* take on increased significance as members of the Bisexual Community continue to face indifference, intolerance, discrimination, hate and violence in their everyday lives and in the communities that hold dear to their heart.

The Awards recognise both bisexual and non-bisexual people, groups and services from across society and across the Nation. This is the Bisexual Community's way to say thank-you to people and that their contribution and support to bisexual people and the partners of Bi people is recognised and appreciated.

The *Elaine Kemp & Wayne Roberts National Bisexual Activism Awards* was introduced in 1998 and recognises bisexual peoples involvement in areas of activism and social justice.

The 1999 Award recipients have demonstrated a wide range of qualities and skills that include leadership, creativity, innovation, dedication, compassion, activism, entertainment, justice, visibility, pride and friendliness. ABN acknowledges that many others including previous Award recipients continue to work for the betterment of bisexuals and others in Australian society.

It was with great pleasure that the Australian Bisexual Network bestowed the **1999 Australian Bisexual Community Advancement Awards** to the following Bisexual people for their contribution and service to the Bisexual Community.

Peter John McGill of Sydney, New South Wales
Melissa de Silva (Cross Campus Sexuality Network of NSW) of Penrith, New South Wales
Karen Patzer (Sydney BiFem Group) of Sydney, New South Wales
Brenda Greig (Brisbane BiFem Group) of Logan City, Queensland
Bruce Marker (Townsville Bisexual Group) of Townsville, Queensland
Bob Greig (Australian Bisexual Network) of Brisbane, Queensland

The Australian Bisexual Network also had the pleasure in bestowing the **1999 Australian Bisexual Community Advancement Awards** to the following people, groups and services that have provided support to bisexual people and the partners of bisexual people and thus contributed to the advancement of the Bisexual Community in Australia.

Mrs. Norma Beer (Enigma - Female Partners of Bi Men) of Perth, Western Australia.
Ms. Shayne Wilde (Queensland Assoc. for Gay and Lesbian Rights) of Brisbane, Queensland
West Guys Inc. of Western Sydney, New South Wales
Rainbow Community Centre Inc. of Brisbane, Queensland

The Australian Bisexual Network would also like to make special mention of the past two Organising Committees of the Health In Difference Conferences (Sydney 1995 and Melbourne 1998) and that of the current Organising Committee of Health In Difference 3, the **3rd National Conference on Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Health**, (Adelaide 20-22 October 1999) for their inclusion and support of Bisexual people.

It was with great pleasure that the Australian Bisexual Network bestowed the **1999 Elaine Kemp & Wayne Roberts National Award for Bisexual Activism in Australia** on three young Bisexual people for their activism in areas such as bi visibility, bisexual rights, combating homophobia and biphobia, in student and youth issues and same sex relationship rights and in journalism.

Catherine Lawrence of Melbourne, Victoria
Glenn Vassallo of Sydney, New South Wales
Dean Durber of Sydney, New South Wales

The Awards were presented at a ceremony held in Brisbane at Options Nightclub during the Australian Gaymes, Easter 1999. We were fortunate that Catherine from Melbourne was able to attend and receive her Award presented to her by Queensland Democrat Senator Andrew Bartlett. ABN extends our appreciation to Senator Bartlett, management & staff of Options Nightclub and those members who assisted on the night.



Senator Andrew Bartlett presents the national Bi activist Award to Catherine Lawrence of Melbourne.



Catherine Lawrence with her Bi Activist Award



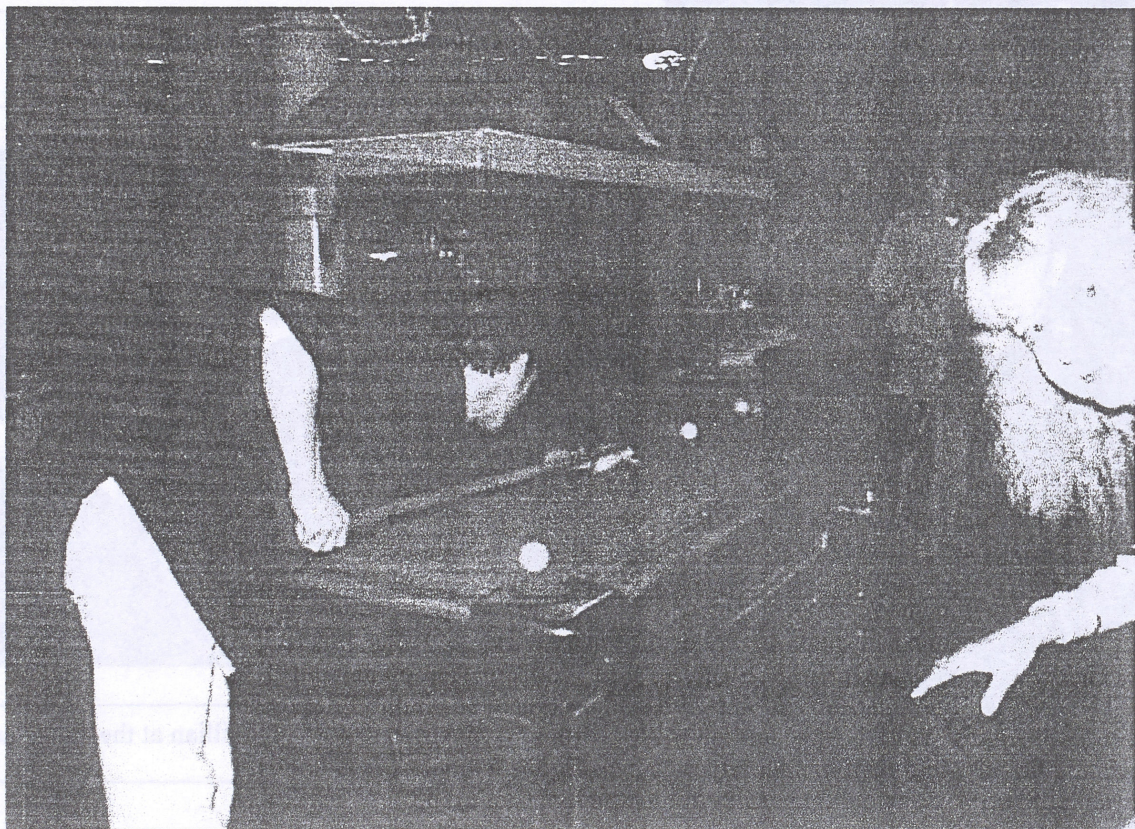
Left - Senator Bartlett with Brisbane member, Gillian, at the Awards held in Brisbane at Easter 1999.



Sabina, Catherine, Brenda & Gillian at the Bi Awards.



Bar Bi on June 12th





Celebrating Bisexual Diversity in the 1999 Sydney Mardi Gras Parade



Some of the ABN members, family & friends at a BBQ at Gabby & Belle's townhouse in Brisbane.

Celebrities come out.

Robert Downey Jr.

Actor, Robert Downey Jr. discussed his sexuality in great detail earlier this year in an interview with *Detours* magazine. Although Downey never labels himself as Bisexual, he did say he think that everybody is bisexual. He then went on to describe his sexual encounters with women and men. Downey also said at the age of 15 he had something going on with a trannie.

Stephen Gately

Teenage heart-throb, Stephen Gately of the Irish boy band, *Boyzone*, came out as Gay last month, rather than be outed in the Press. Gately proclaimed that he is in love and began a relationship with Elroy de Jong, the 26 year old former member of Dutch boy band, *Caught In The Act*, last November. British and Irish media applauded his brave move in declaring he is gay and in love.

Queers with Disabilities

There is a new group starting up in Brisbane for bisexual, lesbian, transgender and gay people with a disability. The first meeting will be on 18th July at 2pm at the coffee shop (next to newsagent) on the first floor of the Mc Whirters Building, off Brunswick Street Mall, Fortitude Valley.

6th International Bisexual Conference Rotterdam, The Netherlands Northern Summer, 2000

The sixth International Bisexual Conference (IBC6) will be held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands in the northern summer of 2000. The conference theme is "Same Preference, Different Lifestyles." The conference is organized by an independent organizing committee in co-operation with the Dutch Bi Network.

The three day conference features workshops, panels, presentations, papers, and performances. Conference tracks include:

- Activism
- Youth/Student
- Media/Culture
- Gender
- Bisexual History
- Safer Sex/HIV-
- Sexuality
- Non-Bi Partners/Families
- Film and Video
- Our Bodies: Differing Ability, Health, Image
- Global/Regional/Racial/Cultural/Class Differences
- Organizing
- Writers/Literature
- Relationships
- Research/Theory
- Spirituality
- Personal Growth
- Internet
- Performance
- Track X (other sessions)

Conference presenters currently include bisexuals from Europe, Australia, and the USA. The expected attendance is several hundreds of bisexuals, friends, and allies from all over the World.

The conference language is English.

For more information, call the Dutch Bi Network at +43-6-5276 6064,

Email to ibc6@lnbi.demon.nl

or visit the IBC6 conference web site at: <http://www.lnbi.demon.nl/ibc6/>

Further information, including a registration form, registration fees, a call for workshops, presentations, panels, etc. are posted at the IBC6 web site. They will be sent to bisexually-oriented email mailing lists, and in bisexual print outlets such as Bi-Nieuws, Bijou, Anything That Moves magazine, the BiNet USA quarterly, National Biways and local bi newsletters.

So start planning now for your trip to Rotterdam in our northern Summer. See you there.

6th International Bisexual Conference

Northern Summer 2000

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

This conference features workshops, speakers, panels, a dance party and the chance to meet Bi people from all over the World. The conference language is English.

For additional information, write us at: **P.O. Box 75087, 1070AB Amsterdam, the Netherlands;**

E-mail: ibc6@lnbi.demon.nl or visit the IBC6 web site at: <http://www.lnbi.demon.nl/ibc6/>

Registration fee schedule

	Before May 1 st 2000	After May 1 st 2000
Student ¹ / Elder ² admission	f 80	f 125
General admission	f 125	f 175
Work exchange ³	up to 4 hours	not available

- (1. Students must present full-time student ID at registration)
- (2. Elders must provide proof of age 60 or older at registration)
- (3. People who pre-register and are unable to pay the full admission fee may request work exchange at a rate of 1/4 of the admission price per hour.) People *unable* to pay or perform work exchange may provide a statement describing the reason in lieu of payment.

Travel grants may be available to people from developing countries, youth or students. To apply, please write, outlining request to: IBC6 Organizing, P.O. Box 75087, 1070AB Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Please return the form below with a check or money order as soon as possible. A conference mailing will be sent to all pre-registrants by May 15th, 2000.

Fill out and return to: IBC6, P.O. Box 75087, 1070AB Amsterdam, the Netherlands

- ☐ I have room in my car for ___ people from my area. ☐ I would like a ride (no guarantees)
- ☐ I can provide community housing for _____
- ☐ I need community housing (You must register before April 1st - no guarantees)
- ☐ I need child care for ___ children aged _____. (Must register before April 1st)
- ☐ I need ASL interpretation. (You must register before April 1st)
- ☐ I have the following special need _____
- ☐ I am a full-time student. ☐ I am an elder. ☐ I qualify for free admission: _____
- ☐ I am requesting ___ hours of work exchange as partial/total payment

Language(s) I can ☐ translate or ☐ assist with questions in: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Phone number: _____ e-mail address: _____

- ☐ I would like to donate an additional f ___ to help cover sign interpretation and childcare
- ☐ I would like to donate an additional f ___ to the International Travel Assistance Fund.

Enclosed is my check for f ___ payable in Dutch Guilders to IBC6.

Payments outside the Netherlands must be made by International Postal Order.

Book Review: *Married Women who Love Women* by Carren Strock

Reviewed by Linda Blair

Reprinted from *BiWomen* newsletter

Reading Carren Strock's book *Married Women Who Love Women* brought back many memories of my own exciting, tumultuous, and bitter-but-mostly-sweet coming out period.

Early in the book, Carren Strock reveals her own story of awakening through her close friendship, intimate connection, and eventual deep attraction to her best friend Toby. As she describes it: "One evening, while we were sitting and talking, I found myself looking, really looking, at Toby. She smiled at me from across the room and a strange and powerful feeling rushed through my body. My heart began to race. I realised I was in love with my best friend."

From that point, Carren felt like their customary hello and good-bye hugs took on new meaning." For her they did, but, as it turned out, not for Toby. The minute Carren revealed her "love" for her friend, everything changed between them. The ease, comfort, and closeness they had always had with each other was replaced by an awkward, more forced atmosphere as Toby became more guarded and Carren more self-conscious until eventually their friendship faded altogether.

Her story and so many others that Strock includes, some similar, some quite different, make this book worth reading. *Married Women who Love Women* is the result of at least several dozen interviews Strock conducted with women who were or are married to men and who also love women (or MWLW's as Strock refers to them). The issues, logistical, psychological and sexual, that each woman did and do face as a result of their life situations, are fascinating. Woman after woman, tells her own story in her own words. The breadth of experiences, as well as the ingenuity and creativity that many of these women, and quite a few of their husbands and/or female lovers, approach their situation with, was for me, as a polyamorous identified bisexual, both surprising and inspiring. Rosalie, as well as her husband Jack and life partner Brenda, are happy living as a family. Rosalie lives in "a rural setting in a midwestern state" and has been married to Jack for twenty-five years. She says she has always had a great deal of "personal freedom" in her marriage and so when she met Brenda while on a business trip, it followed that Brenda soon met Jack and began to visit Rosalie every weekend. She writes, "I actually believe that Jack was the one who began to talk about a life that included all three of us. He did not want to lose me, or have the life we had together ruined, and knew that Brenda had become important to me. He also saw that I loved and needed her." Although Rosalie is sexually active with both Brenda and Jack, she considers herself a lesbian rather than bi because her primary attraction is to women. Although we hear a few words from Jack's own voice, we unfortunately do not hear any directly from Brenda, but Rosalie tells us that "she does regret that she will never have me to herself." They have developed a "three-cornered hug" that has become a nightly ritual (and is the extent of the physical affection between Jack and Brenda as well as between the three of them as a trio). Like many polyamorous individuals, Rosalie's major relationship stress is finding enough time to satisfy each of her partners.

Many women in the book continue to love, feel great affection for, and share a very close friendship with their husbands. Of these women, many stay married, although in plenty of cases they or their husbands seek to separate or divorce even though they still have a strong affinity with one another.

Other women feel somewhat or completely alienated from their husbands. For many, this has built steadily over time and many women describe that alienation as a primary factor, which hastened their discovery or motivated them to act on their same sex attractions. In many of these situations they or their husbands seek divorce. But many others continue to try and "work things out" or stay married for logistical reasons, especially those with children. Still others stayed together out of societal or familial expectations, or because of personal fears.

Two common themes run through almost every woman's story. Virtually every woman felt unsatisfied with her emotional connection with her husband. Many describe their connections to their husbands as friendships. Few talk of passion as an ongoing part of their marital connection. Lois's story is fairly typical, as she explains "Initially, when we first got married, there was definitely sexual attraction between my husband and me. We had a great sex life." Then she describes a growing sense of feeling, "cut off" from her husband. As her feelings of isolation grew, she developed a friendship with another woman that soon became emotional and then physical. She explains further "If it was strictly sex I needed I know I could have gotten that from my husband. No. That wasn't the reason I turned to her. Emotionally I had a need that was not being filled."

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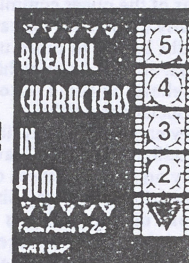
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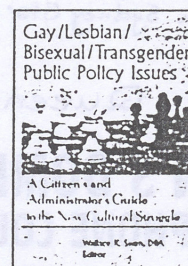
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Prices are in US dollars

Dunstan death

Former South Australian premier Don Dunstan died of lung cancer.

Dunstan is survived by long-time partner Stephen Cheng, his first wife Gretel, and their three children. Dunstan led an ALP government in South Australia for nine years from 1970, and during that time reformed laws governing Aboriginal land rights, homosexuality, and consumer rights. He will be fondly remembered for wearing hot pink shorts in parliament.

The demonisation of bisexuals

Who would be a bisexual? Or more specifically, who would own up to being a bisexual, especially when it comes to ticking the various identity boxes on a Mardi Gras membership form? Better, perhaps, for the bisexual to swallow his/her pride and play it gay/lesbian (at a pinch, queer) for entry to the party. On the other hand, even the American military has a "don't ask don't tell" membership policy, although why any queer would want to join that particular party has always been beyond me. Well, apart from the uniforms and the medical benefits that is.

We've just witnessed another outbreak of the ongoing bisexual controversy. These debates, as you probably realised, invariably become quite heated, with accusations of treachery and betrayal flying thick and fast. And yet, it is important to note that these debates, although the details may change, are not new. They have periodically erupted from the collective unconscious of the queer community since the early days of gay liberation, and no doubt before in more unorganised ways. Still, it is worthwhile to put these debates in some historical and psychosocial perspective.

In the very early days of gay liberation, bisexuality was "in". Drawing very liberally on Freudian ideas of an innate bisexuality, some gay liberationists spoke of bisexuality as "the ideal condition". Ideal was the key word here. Despite the catchiness of such slogans as "gay is good but bi is better", this early commitment to bisexuality was generally more theoretical than practical. Homosexual liberationists soon discovered that

GUEST SPOT DR ROBERT REYNOLDS

Who would own up to being one?

reclaiming a repressed bisexuality wasn't as straightforward as they might have hoped. In fact, many

within the movement wanted to celebrate and organise around the fact that they felt barely a twinge of heterosexual desire. By the end of the first year of gay liberation, bisexuals were being asked to leave, sometimes politely, sometimes not. This trend was accelerated with the emergence of a radical lesbian feminism which increasingly cast heterosexual relations as a crime against the sisterhood. By the mid 1970s, as many gay liberationists drifted off to long-term relationships, therapy or tenure, the original liberationist definition of gay in its broadest sense, which had meant "sexually free", was narrowed considerably. Gay now meant, pretty exclusively, homosexual.

On many counts, one can understand why this happened. The theory that "we are all bisexual really" was

My guess is that the real is less pressing than the imagined threat bisexuals pose to the achievement of gay and lesbian identities.

always more palatable as a dinner party dictum than a life choice. It flattened Freud's complex theory of infant desire and identification – and the relinquishment of those desires and identifications – into a fairly simplistic formula. Moreover, it said little about the privileges withheld from those who were deemed to have fallen on the wrong side of this oedipal divide – homosexuals. Little wonder, then, that most homosexual energy went towards creating viable and vibrant gay and lesbian identities, activism and communities in a world where those choices were – and still are – proscribed.

But the spectre of the bisexual has continued to haunt the creation of gay and lesbian life – the return of the

repressed, in more ways than one. Activists and party organisers now find themselves in the uncomfortable position of defending policies that are discriminatory, and this from a community that celebrates its own struggle against a dominant heterosexuality. While the identity politicians refuse to queer the barricades, the humanists among us wince and the post-modernists smirk. Meanwhile, the figure of the bisexual is left to roam the gay and lesbian imagination, taking cranky potshots at all that "we" have achieved.

There are real political issues to be dealt with in these sexuality debates, but my guess is that for many of us, the real is less pressing than the imagined threat bisexuals pose to the achievement of gay and lesbian identities. He may have taken a drubbing in recent years, but a resilient legacy of Sigmund Freud is his insight that a sense of identity is a fragile creation. This, unfortunately, is a fact of psychic life. But it is a knowledge from which we too often flee.

There are various ways in which we can organise our flight, most notably a demonisation of the other. You don't need to look as far as the Balkans to see groups defend their own precarious sense of identity by excluding and obliterating others. Into these other despised groups we place those parts of ourselves we wish to disavow. This isn't a call to arms for bisexuality. I for one shall continue my pretty much exclusive pursuit of the male body. ■

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From Sydney Star Observer 8 July 1999.

Queensland

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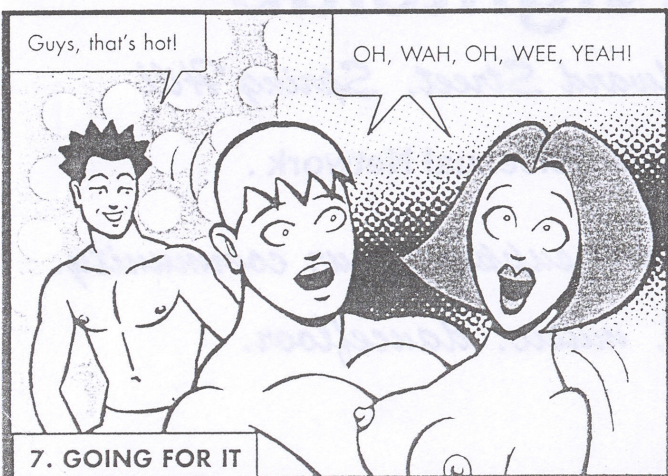
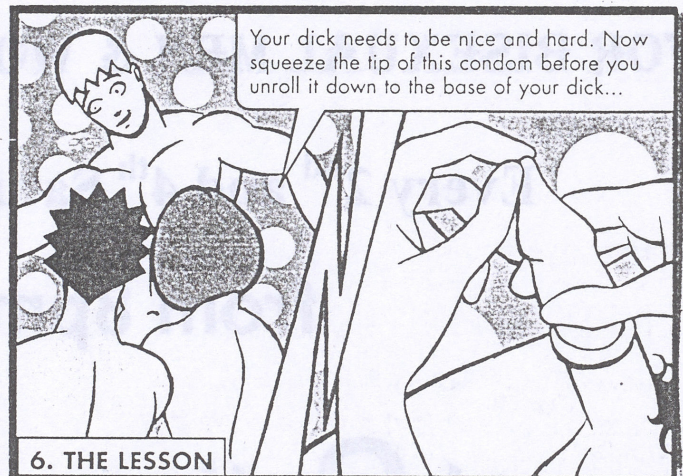
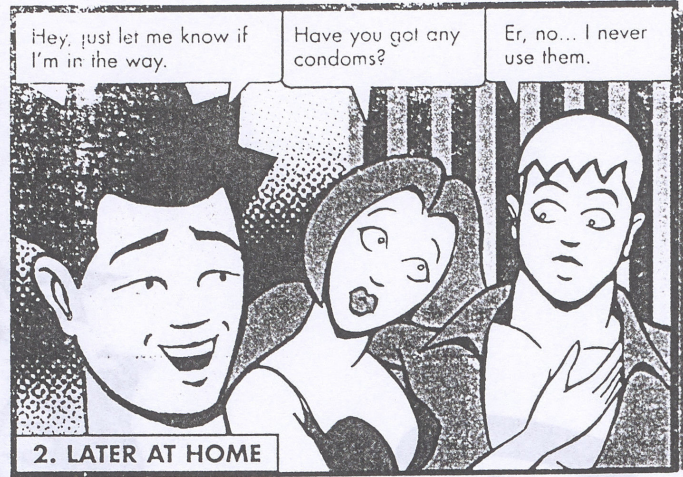
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"National Biways." National Biways, vol. 7, no. 36, July 1999.
Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/
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